

## ABSTRACT

A communication protocol specification is divided into subsets of parameters based on patterns established by equipment vendors. A combination of subsets is selected based on parameters and features supported by particular network devices installed in a network. A user interface facilitates convenient creation or modification of a configuration file, which instructs a network device how to format a communication message and what information is to be contained therein.

After the configuration file is loaded into a device, it controls software switches in the device such that features and parameters corresponding to the parameters selected with the user interface and controlled by the switches are either enabled or disabled based on the parameters selected. Supported parameter combinations for popular equipment may be prestored so that selection with the interface of a particular piece of equipment automatically edits the configuration file according to the features and parameters supported by said equipment.